

ADVISORY COUNCIL ON TIDAL FINFISHERIES



MINUTES OF JANUARY 17, 2018

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ADVISORY COUNCIL

Dewayne Fox, Ph.D., Chair
Bernard "Bernie" Pankowski
Brian Hoffecker
James "Jay" Little
Marvin Kahl, Jr.
P. "Wes" Townsend
Joseph Smith

DIVISION OF FISH & WILDLIFE

Chief Drew Aydelotte
John Clark
Stewart Michels
David Saveikis, Director

PUBLIC

4 Visitors

Agenda Item 1. Welcome

Chairman Dewayne Fox called the meeting to order at 6:02 PM and welcomed everyone.

Agenda Item 2. Approval of November 1, 2017 Meeting Minutes

A motion to accept the November meeting minutes as modified by the Council was approved without objection.

Agenda Item 3. Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission (ASMFC) update – John Clark, Fisheries Administrator, updated the Council on actions taken to comply with changes made to ASMFC Fishery Management Plans (FMP) in 2017. Delaware will be in a Tautog management region with Maryland and Virginia, with the three states having regulations that, at a minimum, require a 16" minimum length, a four fish daily possession limit and a closed season of May 16 – June 30. Draft Addendum V to the American Eel FMP will provide options to increase the yellow eel coast-wide landings cap, change the management triggers, alter the yellow eel allocation and increase Maine's glass eel quota. Delaware held a January 3, 2018 ASMFC hearing on Draft Addendum XXX to the Black Sea Bass FMP, at which a summary of management options for the 2018 Black Sea Bass season in the southern region (DE-NC) were presented on proposed different season lengths while preserving the 12.5" minimum size and 15 fish possession limit. Delaware opted not have a February 2018 Black Sea Bass season since it would have required shortening the Black Sea Bass season in June or September. The Atlantic Striped Bass Working Group will provide future guidance on the development of biological reference points that best meet management objectives. The new Cobia FMP will require Delaware to adopt a minimum size and possession limit for Cobia. Amendment 3 to the Atlantic Menhaden FMP, approved in November 2017, continued the use of single species reference points until the ecological reference points are developed, increased the Total Allowable Catch (TAC) by 8% to 216,000 metric tons and increased Delaware's TAC allocation by 1,500% to ~2.4 million pounds.

Agenda Item 4. Mid Atlantic Fisheries Management Council (MAFMC) October Meeting Summary – Stewart Michels, Fisheries Program Manager, discussed the development of a Letter of Authorization program that would

allow a Black Sea Bass recreational fishing season during January and February 2019. The MAFMC is working on an Amendment to the Bluefish FMP that may reallocate the quota between the recreational and commercial sectors. The MAFMC is requiring all for-hire recreational fishing boats with federal permits to file electronic Vessel Trip Reports in 2018.

Agenda Item 5. Regulatory Update – Stewart Michels, Fisheries Program Manager, stated the Division is working on regulatory changes to the commercial fishing apprenticeship process that will be consistent with changes to 7 Delaware Code § 915 and changes to commercial striped bass tagging that will be consistent with 7 Delaware Code § 903A. Updates were also provided on the proposed changes to the Coastal Shark, American Lobster, Tautog and Black Sea Bass regulations that are required to comply with recent changes to their respective FMPs.

Agenda Item 6. Oyster cage culture in Delaware Bay: potential interactions with finfishing – Stewart Michels, Fisheries Program Manager, briefed the Council on recent inquiries received by the Division regarding caged oyster aquaculture on the long-established leased oyster beds in Delaware Bay. Mr. Michels explained that such aquaculture is not specifically allowed nor forbidden by current law and regulation, but it would be advisable, if oyster aquaculture is to be established, that the law and regulations be changed to allow successful aquaculture in Delaware Bay that does not negatively affect other fishing activities. Council expressed concerns about oyster aquaculture in Delaware Bay, but were optimistic that it could be compatible with recreational and commercial fishing. The Council asked for regular updates on this topic.

Agenda Item 7. Director's Update – David Saveikis, Director of Fish & Wildlife, updated the Council on the progress of several construction projects, including the Little Creek Fishing Access area, which should be completed by fall 2018, and the reconstruction of the Phillips Landing Fishing Access Area, which should begin in late 2018; the Inland Bays Shellfish Aquaculture Program issuing its first lease and several more applications under review, with commercial shellfish aquaculture anticipated to begin in 2018; and the

current budget balance of the Waterway Management Fund administered by the Division of Watershed Stewardship.

Suggested Agenda Items for Next Meeting

1. The impact of Inland Bays shellfish aquaculture on fishing.
2. Update on projects proposed for the Waterway Management Fund.

The meeting adjourned at 7:36 PM.
Respectfully Submitted by



John H. Clark

Recording Secretary

